



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

VOLUME XXIII

SEPTEMBER 1917

NUMBER 2

AMERICANS AND THE WORLD-CRISIS

ALBION W. SMALL
University of Chicago

NOTE.—The following pages contain the substance of a Commencement address delivered at Colby College, Sunday evening, June 17, 1917. The address was not written and was not intended for print. If it were to be transposed into the style presumed to be suitable for a journal of this type, accuracy and fulness of statement, with citations of evidence, would be necessary to an extent impossible in the circumstances under which the copy has been prepared. A summer cottage at one of the most isolated spots on Cape Cod does not supply means of academic precision. The further fact that such pertinence as the address may have belongs to it less as an impersonal argument than as a reflex of intimate experience, decided in favor of reproducing it as nearly as possible in the form in which it was spoken.

On my way to the service in this church this morning, one of the most dramatic of the apostle Paul's utterances came into my mind. The thought followed: If what I have to say this evening were to be cast in the form of a sermon, those words should be the text. By a coincidence which stimulated my interest, President Roberts read as the Scripture lesson of the morning the chapter which contains the passage: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." A school of interpretation which is unhappily not yet

extinct might find it easy to prove to its own satisfaction that the apostle foresaw and specifically predicted those political factors which have lately been known in Russia as "the dark forces." Not being inclined to that style of exegesis, I feel no temptation to suggest that the apostle was thinking especially of those other equally dark forces of which I shall speak more in detail. I hope, however, that before I am through your thoughts will go back to these words, as symbolic not less of our stage than of the apostle's in the eternal conflict between good and evil.

At the first meeting with my class of graduate students, on the opening day of the summer quarter, 1910, one face held my attention from all the rest. At the time, the only word which I could find for my impression of that face was *spectral*. It was the type of face which is associated in my imagination with Savonarola and St. Francis of Assisi. At the end of the hour the young man whose face was so unusual introduced himself. In a few words he outlined his personal history. Educated and consecrated in France as a Roman Catholic priest, he had come to this country with the intention of making it his home. He had received an appointment as professor in an important seminary for the training of priests. With the approval of his archbishop, he had decided to devote his summer vacations to further academic work in a subject remote from that of his professorship.

Therewith an acquaintance began which I cherish as among the most notable of the many close associations with students during my thirty-six years of college and university teaching. For three successive summer quarters this young man returned to the University of Chicago, and at the end of the third quarter he received his degree of Master of Arts. Meanwhile I had found in him one of the choicest spirits it has ever been my privilege to know. He revealed himself to me in ways which I had never supposed possible to a priest with a layman, and especially with a Protestant. In this acquaintance I learned, what even Bobby Burns may not have suspected, that—"A priest's a man for a' that." If nothing had deflected the course of my friend's career, his native and acquired mental and spiritual qualities would doubtless have assured him high rank among American Catholics.

Early in the autumn of 1914 I was startled, but not surprised, to learn that immediately after the German violation of Belgium my friend had renounced his ecclesiastical prospects, had crossed the Atlantic with all speed, and had enlisted as a soldier of France. At long intervals he sent me samples of the laconic postal-card messages permitted to soldiers: He was well and hoped to be sent to the front soon; he had been wounded, but was well again and hoping to rejoin his company in the trenches; he had been wounded again and probably disqualified for further fighting; he had regained strength enough to be serving as interpreter at staff headquarters; and in January of this year came a long letter, the leading theme of which was this: "Until lately I have felt that I had no desire ever to see my adopted country again. But I have reconsidered. After the war the problem will remain, Can America save her soul? I now intend to return, if I live, after I can render no more service here, and spend the rest of my life trying to help work out that salvation."

This soldier of Jesus Christ, detailed for service at the French front of the Army of the Prince of Peace, was right. For Americans, everything else in the present world-crisis is incidental to the problem: *Will America evade or accept the moral issue which Germany has forced upon the world, and thus lose or save her soul?*

I am looking impatiently for my friend's next letter, to find out whether his hope concurs with mine that at last we have made what Dr. Robins used to call the "generic choice," which decides between perdition and salvation. At all events, the nearest aspect of the present world-crisis is this: Without our choice, we, the people of the United States, have been carried by the tide of times into an ordeal more critical than that of '61 or '76. It is the more fierce because its most meaning phase is relatively silent, subtle, spiritually searching. The present testing process does not fall chiefly in the loud forum of politics, nor amidst the roar of battle. It is rather first and foremost a demonstration of national mind and heart. *Have we the mental vision and the moral grip to champion, according to our physical strength, against the shifty enemy that now threatens it, the principle that moral imperatives, not physical force, shall set the standards for the civilized world?*

Let us turn back for a moment of that sort of national stock-taking which Americans must learn to practice before our nation can achieve the stage of discretion. If anyone in the audience has the curiosity to find out how long I have been working on this particular phase of the problem, I might refer him to the files for 1879 of a certain paper published in Maine. They contain a full confession of my first severe political disillusion. In season and out of season, I have been ever since trying to assemble the literal facts. I went to Europe as a student thirty-eight years ago, unquestioning in the faith, as it had been delivered to Americans upon the Fourth of July, that America is "a spectacle to all the world." In less than two months upon European soil all my previous political notions had been scrapped by discovery that America was a "spectacle" to the people with whom, up to that time, I had come in contact, almost precisely in the same sense in which Buffalo Bill's "Wild West Show" was a "spectacle" when it began to exhibit in our eastern cities. Few Americans are yet aware of it, but substantially that estimate of America has prevailed in Europe until the present hour. Even the scholarly President of the United States has encouraged the popular American vanity that the people of Germany are looking longingly for the emancipating moment when they may cast aside a hated form of government and adopt ours. On the contrary, it is nearer the truth to say that if, at any time within the last fifteen years, the German Social Democrats had gained full control of the entire civic and military machinery of the Empire, they would have lost not a moment in arranging with the Kaiser and his bureaucrats to run it for them.

I have no means of knowing whether the present war has altered the opinion of Germans in general that the government of the Empire is the best in the world. At all events, we Americans are certainly deluding ourselves in assuming that, unless a spiritual revolution, of which we have no credible evidence, has occurred, the Germans would willingly substitute our form of government for theirs. So long as we cherish such a fiction, we misinterpret their psychology as pitifully as they have misinterpreted ours.

It would be a rash man who would commit himself to a formula of what will not happen in any one of the countries now at war.

This much is notorious, however, among all who are intimately acquainted with the Germans: A revolution which should displace the present German government by a democracy in form and spirit of the American or the British type would be much more astonishing, and, so far as visible evidence indicates, it is far more improbable than the Russian revolution was until it had become an accomplished fact.

One of my colleagues who is of German parentage has said: "The Germans respect their government, but they do not love it; the Americans love their government, but they do not respect it." A further detail in the same bill of particulars is that high and low in Germany, as a general rule, regard America as synonymous with thinly disguised anarchy. This impression is sometimes spontaneous, sometimes artificially induced. Sometimes it has been maliciously stimulated. Whatever the reasons, the fact is that, not merely in Germany, but in every country of Continental Europe, and with slightly less certainty in Great Britain, if you could get a typical citizen of the more intelligent strata to express his candid opinion of America, the result would make you blush or boil, according to your temperament. It will be good for us to let this indictment sink in, and not too quickly to set up a denial.

Two years ago a Serbian, who had been a newspaper man in various parts of Eastern Europe, made his way to Chicago. He asked one of my neighbors, "Do you know what they say in Serbia about this country? They say that the United States of America is the place where the Jews have the money, the Irish have the politics, and the Americans have the flag!" Inaccurate enough in detail, to be sure, but the formula is fairly representative of the bizarre impressions which America has thus far created in Europe.

And do you wonder at it, when you run over some of the evidence which has weighed so heavily in European opinion? Does jury service in the United States in general command the type of citizen necessary to make our jury system respectable? Are taxes levied and collected in any state of our Union with fairness enough to save our boasted democracy from reproach? Do you know a single city in the United States as honestly and efficiently governed as every city in Germany? To be sure, Mayor Mitchel

is giving New York City an administration for which he deserves the thanks of every American, but news of that has probably not yet reached Europe. Do you know another country in the civilized world as lavish as ours in its public expenditures, and with so little in proportion to show for what it pays? Do you know of another nation among the great powers of the world whose people, even at this late moment, are as unconvinced and as unconcerned as we whether there is any cause under heaven for which it is worth while to offer their fortunes and their lives?

For the purposes of this hour it is unnecessary to defend ourselves against this foreign indictment. It would certainly be as pitiful as pleading the baby act if we should set up our traditional self-satisfaction in reply. Between the two extremes, there is ample room for reflection on works meet for national repentance. I have referred chiefly to the domestic aspects of our American crudity. Our attitude toward international relations has been not less juvenile, but I will treat that aspect of the case in a different setting. Let me merely remark in passing that for a generation the American sociologists have been called everything uncomplimentary from silly to criminal, while they were trying to fulfil their mission of calling attention to the radical fact which war is now demonstrating on the world's blackboard, namely, that we live in an interlocking world. Not a blade of grass is growing in Maine today, not a spear of wheat in the Dakotas, that will not have its value made or marred by what takes place in Europe between the present time and the time of harvest. Not our agriculture, nor our transportation, nor our manufacture, nor our commerce, nor our finance, nor our science, nor our morals, nor our religion can be what we alone want them to be. Each and all can be only what we can succeed in making them, in unavoidable reaction with all the activities of all the other peoples of the world.

Up till now, we Americans have on the whole been living in such pioneer conditions that an influential fraction of us still construe the universal law of life in variations of the slogan: "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." In fact, this never has been, is not, and never can be better than a casual and superficial version of the human lot. Humanity moves

forward as a whole in the degree in which men learn to appropriate the advantages and to control the disadvantages of teamwork with one another. But teamwork means operating as a team—each member in his place, and working in his place to make the team efficient and the members consequently successful—no member getting a success which forces the team to carry him as dead weight, not to say as grit in its running gear. The vital question in American life today is whether we can achieve a controlling sense of responsibility of the individual to the whole; whether we can develop a type of citizenship which feels bound to share the common burdens, or whether we must grow apart and disintegrate, because the different groups of us have no care beyond the particular interests of each.

Those molders of public opinion have had more than their share of influence in America who have taught politics and economics, and morals and religion in an individualistic sense. They have circulated the illusion that the scheme of things is a magnified free-lunch counter and that the wisdom of this world and of the next consists in being present before the supplies are gone. To save our souls, we must decide whether we are to believe in perpetuity that our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in this world and our prospects of felicity in the next are hand-outs from the kitchen door of Divine Providence, with no obligation on our part to saw wood in return.

God only knows whether the American people have gained or lost in moral stature since our Civil War. At that time hundreds of thousands of men, both North and South, counted not their lives dear unto themselves so long as a cause which they appraised as vital was in danger. At that time other hundreds of thousands of sisters, and wives, and mothers of those men, North and South, counted not their happiness dear unto themselves if any sacrifices which they could make might promote the triumph of the cause they loved. More than this, the uprising of North and South in '61 marked a stupendous moral achievement on both sides. Whatever our judgment about the merits of the opposing creeds, North and South alike offered themselves on the altar of principles which they held dearer than themselves. In spite of the wonderful change of

attitude in recent months in the United States, we have yet to prove whether the American people of today are capable of like renunciation. As a people, we are all in confusion as to whether spiritual conquests remain for which we are willing to make the necessary physical sacrifice.

Pass with me then to the actual present world-crisis which has forced Americans to commit themselves upon this paramount issue of national character. But indulge me first in one more strictly personal reference.

The longer I live, the more am I humbled by the conviction of how little I know about anything. The one subject upon which my study has pivoted for a generation has been German theory and practice about human relations. My knowledge is still inadequate enough of this enormous bulk of fact and reasoning. Yet the range of knowledge within which my information is a little less superficial than in any other is that filled by the records of what German publicists have said and done since 1555 about human affairs, as they have been, as they are, as they should be. Men in similar lines of work have often charged that my chief purpose in life is to smuggle German ways into America. I confess that for twenty-five years I have done my best to convince my students that Americans have more to learn from the Germans than from any other people, past or present. This is as true now as it was before the Germans burst into the open with that decisive vice of their civilization which has now become the central challenge to the rest of the world. Simply because there are towering merits and abysmal defects in German civilization, the latter at least, and in certain respects the former, irreconcilable with our standards, we may profit more from understanding the Germans than from knowing any other people. The present war has not yet changed the German people or the German state. It has simply revealed both. I venture these allusions to my own more intimate knowledge of these German traits than of anything else, as guaranty that whatever I may say more is at least not extemporaneous. I am expressing merely present applications of judgments that have been maturing in the course of my professional work for nearly forty years.

Since August, 1914, the nations have been groping in darkness about the meaning of the world-crisis. At first the unsophisticated saw in it only a local European quarrel. Then it relentlessly engulfed the world. The stars in their courses have meanwhile merged into illuminators of the crisis. Slowly but surely the truth has dawned, even upon the reluctant mind of the patriotic but incredulous President of the United States. Never in history has the moral principle at issue in a war been clearer than in the present struggle. We have only to disregard details and to look straight at the substance of the whole matter. *The question which dwarfs and ought to silence all the rest is whether this generation will doom coming generations to live in a world in which might has reconquered right, or whether this generation will endow coming generations with a heritage of right controlling might.*

It is not necessary to find a convincing answer to the question, What caused the war? Whether we have a formula which suits ourselves in reply to that question or not, a much more important question is now foremost. Whatever the complex of causes and effects which literally released the forces at present beyond control, that complex is not identical with the group of problems involved in the task of restoring control. On the contrary, granting that the explosion of 1914 was a resultant of all the racial, commercial, dynastic, and political rivalries which have been charged with the responsibility; granting that neither of the combatants is guiltless of some share of the wrong which entered into the catastrophe; granting that each nation stands convicted of its own portion of these epic guilts; granting that neither of the powers, our own country not excepted, can conceal its Macbeth hands by historic misdeeds deep-stained enough the multitudinous seas to incarnadine—the present crisis is none of these nor all combined. It is not primarily a struggle of race against race, of ruler against ruler, of trader against trader, of war lord against war lord, of this form of government against that form of government; although each of these antitheses is many times implicated. Least of all is it a purgatory out of which any nation will emerge absolved of any or all past sins. If we try to see with the eyes of future historians, and if we borrow a term from the vocabulary of the psychologists,

we may reduce the situation to a trial of strength between two irreconcilable national psychoses. For convenience we may as well adopt the manner of Herbert Spencer and designate the conflicting forces as a militant versus a moral psychosis.

I will not apologize for this dangerous way of speaking. Always, of course, human affairs are matters, not of impersonal forces, but of intensely personal people. It especially behooves everyone who interprets the present crisis as I do to give this literal fact full force. For safety's sake, therefore, I will translate this convenient academic manner of speaking, to which I shall revert, into less convenient, but also less misleading, literal form: The world is divided today between a group of nations whose units have delivered themselves over to the dictation of an artificial, arbitrary, anti-moral, militaristically imposed code, according to which force is the arbiter of right, and another group of nations driven by the instinct of self-preservation into championship of a morality which makes its appeal to justice as its standard—to the level of which appeal I freely admit they might not have risen for many generations if they had not confronted the alternative of choosing between a self-assertion better than their previous best selves and consent that the foundations of all international morality should be destroyed.

Among the most indelible memory-pictures in my mind is a series reproducing incidents, trifling in themselves, but eloquent as reflections of popular feeling, which occurred in Bangor, Maine, on the day and the following days after the message had come over the wire: "A madman has murdered Abraham Lincoln."

Suppose the message had read instead: "Abraham Lincoln has become violently insane." Suppose the malady had taken the form of acute mania, in the name of freedom, to force the conduct, not only of Lincoln's immediate associates, but of the whole world. The emotions of the people would not have been converted into hate toward Lincoln. Quite likely the latent love and veneration of the loyal states would have responded with pity more intense than the sorrow that surrounded his death. Nevertheless, after recovery from the first shock there would have been little difference of opinion in principle about the duty of taking all necessary measures to restrain the sufferer from violence to himself and others, of

adopting every known means of restoration, and, above all, of reorganizing the administration in closest possible conformity with the fundamental law and with the most unequivocal devotion to the public good.

There are instructive analogies between the moral demands which would have challenged Americans if this fictitious reconstruction of the historical incident had been the reality, and the demands of the present world-crisis upon all people who believe in the rule of right rather than the rule of force.

Since August, 1914, it has been said countless times, all over the world, that Germany is a nation gone mad. As the Germans have committed themselves deeper and deeper, month after month, to detail after detail of the preposterous implications of their national prepossession, the rest of the world has been forced to the conclusion, often against almost invincible preconceptions, that the diagnosis is not a figure of speech but stark truth.

Did you ever have a dear friend, of gentle heart, of brilliant mind, of refined tastes, of sensitive conscience, of high purpose—but suddenly bereft of reason? Instead of becoming demented, did that rarely gifted friend re-enlist all his disordered powers in pathologically energized pursuit of an uncannily perverted purpose? Did that friend betray those enviable traits into unrestricted service of a ruthlessly destructive idea? If you have such a picture as that in mind, it is also symbolically a veracious miniature of present Germany. Never was more impressive unity than the Germans have been displaying for the past three years. Yet it is a unity that is terrific—appalling—because it is splendid physical, mental, and moral strength misdirected by a Satanic obsession. This aberration has resulted from the most deliberate, the most insidious, the most methodical, the most mentally and morally stultifying, program of national self-intoxication that human imagination has ever conceived.

The book which on the whole has impressed me as the most astonishing literary betrayal of the present German state of mind was written, not from the soldier's standpoint at all, but by a man who speaks primarily for Germany's colonizing and missionizing—Paul Rohrbach. The title of the book is *Der deutsche Gedanke in der*

Welt. Since the war began, an English translation has appeared. I have not seen a copy, but if literally rendered the title would be: *The German Idea in the World*. According to the author's explicit declaration, the "German idea" is conviction of the duty of the Germans to impose upon the rest of the world their superior ethical standard! Not content to let the absurdity of this self-righteousness stand by itself, the author actually makes the body of his book an argument to his fellow-Germans to realize this aim, *for the reason that thus far they have failed in every essential quality which is necessary to ethical superiority!*

In its large features, standing forth in results rather than demonstrable in terms of the precise details of cause and effect, the process which has culminated in the present perverted condition of German political consciousness is one of the most open secrets in history. In the main it has been an interplay of two reciprocating factors, each in turn stimulating and stimulated by the other, and even at times merely phases of each other. These factors have not conformed in minutiae to a discoverable scheme of rhythm, or of logical or chronological sequence. On the whole, each in itself and both in co-operation have been accumulating influence for more than two hundred years.

The first of these factors of the present German psychosis has been the increasing success of Prussia as a military machine. From the moment in 1713 when Frederick William the First began his drill-sergeanting of his Prussians, followed by the forty-six years in which his son more than satisfied the military conditions for his honorary title "The Great," through the vacillating reigns of Frederick William Second, Third, Fourth, and even of William the First of the present Empire—a period in which all the artificialities of political, literary, and moral sycophancy had to be under sleepless mobilization to guard the Prussian people from discovering from what mediocre stuff the mythology of the Hohenzollern House was being constructed—to the proclamation of the Empire at Versailles in 1871, on the whole there was cumulative cogency in the militarists' appeal to fact: "Remember what a helpless folk the Germans were from the beginnings of the decline of the Holy Roman Empire, and behold what the Prussian monarchy and the

Prussian army have achieved!" At our remove from the facts it is easy to remember that the epitaph of most military states might well be, "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." Yet, if we can imagine ourselves open to conviction that a single case, and that a case which has not yet run its full course, may be generalized into a valid historical law, we are in a position to understand how the Germans yielded to the lure of the fallacy that military aggression is the sole assurance of national greatness.

The second factor is primarily subjective and schematic. It is the factor in which the deeds of Prussian men of action reappear, "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought"—the reconstruction of German deeds in the form of German political philosophy and political pedagogy. We may get at the truth central to our immediate needs, though only a fraction of the whole truth, if we disregard all the ramifications of this philosophy and confine ourselves to three of its taproots.

In the first place, early in the nineteenth century, while dread of Napoleonism still dogged German minds, Hegel, the most abstract of all German philosophers, crystallized a conception which had been in flux in German thought for many generations, and made it the keystone of his political system: "The State is reason at its highest power."

In spite of the limitation just prescribed, there is strong temptation to widen the discussion into a display of how Kant's noble though critically unconvincing ethical system, with its impressive emphasis upon "the oughtness of the ought," interplayed with the Hegelian idea in forming German minds. The reason, in brief, why the Germans of this generation are not to be explained by Kant is that they now retain only a mechanical pantomime of his veneration for moral authority, while they have forgotten the essential content of his ethics—respect for persons as ends.

If Hegel meant that his dictum veraciously summarizes historical fact, it would be a weakling candidate for the Doctor's degree in history who could not make out a good case for the contradictory thesis: "As we have had it thus far in human experimentation, the state is unreason at its highest power." No matter. This

Hegelian dogma has not been uncontested in Germany, of course, but it has steadily acted as a magnet upon philosophical and unphilosophical Germans alike, and it has attracted them into arrangement around itself as a focus.

If, on the other hand, Hegel meant that when reason displays itself at its highest power and when the state reaches its highest development the two will coincide, the dictum is an unscientific impertinence. Who knows? It is at least conceivable, it begins to affect increasing numbers as probable, that reason, when it is finished, will have brought forth internationalism. In this conceivable internationalism, whatever else may be true of it, the state, as we have it thus far, may be reduced to a merely subaltern rank. At all events, the Hegelian doctrine: "The State is reason at its highest power," turns out to be, not a logical absolute, but merely a precarious opinion.

Yet an acquaintance far short of exhaustive with German publicistic literature since 1812 might assemble ample evidence that this Hegelian conception has been a cardinal factor in molding the present dominant type of German thinking—this, both directly and by diffusion. In particular, it has served to create a spiritual soil in which has flourished the second taproot of German political theory—I hope the confusion of metaphors will not obscure the facts—namely, the increasing concurrence of the formers of public opinion in Germany since 1871 in propaganda of the faith which might as well have been officially codified in this form: *The Prussianized State of the Germans is reason at its highest power*. I have rejected the word "connivance," which volunteered for service in the last sentence, and have conscripted "concurrence" in its place. At this point I am referring not to the whole self-hypnotizing policy which has been in operation among the Germans for two centuries, and which I have referred to as deliberate. My reference now is to a portion of the involved process which has played its part in recent years. In what ratio the actual agents of the school-mastering, first of Prussia, then of Germany, and, finally, in some measure even of the German portions of Austria, have been carrying out a deliberate program of glorifying Prussia and the Prussianized Empire may never be known.

I venture the prediction, however, that some time there will come a school of American historians who will reconsider the records of German leading opinion between 1871 and 1914, and will find in them astonishing resemblances to the political callowness which marked the professions of American political leaders of both parties during that stage of our development indexed by the phrase, "the worship of the Constitution." While it is impossible to make out the proportion in which this public pedagogy was official, or semiofficial, or in any way perfunctory, and in what proportion it was spontaneous, our present concern is chiefly with results. As I intimated earlier, the sooner Americans understand that the Germans believe in their form of government with an intensity that may never have been equaled in a great state, the sooner shall we be able to emerge from the rest of our visionary attitude toward the whole crisis. If limits permitted, evidence in any desired quantity might be exhibited in support of my previous hint that this admiration of the Prussianized system extends, with nonessential reservations, even to the great body of the Social Democrats. Their support of the war is sufficient corroboration for our present purposes. It would be still easier to show that since 1871 the German groups which the majority of Americans would classify as the most reliably progressive have been consistent and impassioned in proclaiming their belief that one of the indispensable conditions of continued German progress must ever be the strengthening of the foundations of the Hohenzollern monarchy. One might begin with Gustav Schmoller of Berlin, whose name probably commands the respect of a larger circle of American students of the social sciences than that of any other living German; and one might continue through the membership of the *Verein für Socialpolitik*, unquestionably since 1874 the most influential extra-governmental body of social theorists in the world. No matter how radical the measures advocated by these men, either as individuals or as a group, the weight of their influence has always counted toward increase of the prestige of the Prussian monarchy. More than this, whatever jealousy of Prussia and the Prussians survives in the lesser German states—speaking always in terms of the situation as it was before the war made inferences about later

developments unreliable—it is as grotesque for Americans to suppose that non-Prussian Germany wants to undo the fusing process completed in 1871 as it was for certain Germans a few years ago to speculate that, if our government were drawn into a foreign war, our southern states would make it the psychological moment for another secession!

All in all, among the Germans since 1871 these two elements have been growing more evident, as attitude if not as explicit creed—first, conscious or unconscious deference toward the Hegelian superstition: “The State is reason at its highest power,” secondly, inclination to accept the Prussianized Empire as the only extant specimen of that state which is reason at its highest power.

But with these two cardinal positions in the German reaction we have not yet brought to light the third and decisive factor on the mental side of German influence in the world-crisis. That factor turns out to be merely the German militarists’ version of naïve savagery which began to function uncounted ages before people were capable of political thought at all—when they frankly did whatever their brutish strength permitted. It is the attitude, merely varying in detail, of the ancient military chieftains, of the later Caesars, and of the more subtle mediaeval benevolent despots.

All through the ages two contradictory conceptions of national life have urged for expression and for mastery. The more elemental of these tendencies has held its ground in more or less disguised form most of the time, in most of the world, down to the present moment. However concrete the visible symbols in which this tendency has been embodied, from the single chief, who got or kept his prestige by superior prowess with his club, down to the latest autocracy of *Kultur*, all the cases of this type of which we have been able to find out very much have buttressed themselves upon the notion, implicit or explicit, that the state is a mysterious, impersonal, superior something, predestined to dominate over the people, and to make the people mere counters in its game. In its more evolved and plausible forms, this theory of the state has always enlisted the devilishly resourceful cunning of a few in getting this mystically impersonal conception of the state identified with themselves. As we look back upon it now, or as we look

around, wherever in the world this view still holds, and if we poke underneath its disguises and find what the reality is that remains, it is evident that this supernaturalistic supposition, the "State," has usually been in actuality a very concrete, and self-conscious, and self-asserting person, or bunch of persons, masquerading as the "State" and compelling or cajoling the masses of the people into pulling their chestnuts out of the fire, instead of leading that kind of co-operation which would make most for the general good. Historically, with few exceptions, the actual state has been some tyrant, some oriental despot, some man on horseback, some commercial oligarchy, as in Venice under the Doges, some military caste, as in Germany today. In each case, with qualifications few or many, weak or strong, in numberless varieties, the aims of a usurping faction, rather than the general welfare, have controlled the destinies of the whole. Tradition has put in the mouth of Louis XIV the symbolic words: "The State? I am the State!" Whether the "Great Monarch" ever uttered the formula or not, the sentiment is the breath of life of the actual ruler or rulers in every state still controlled by any subspecies whatsoever of the primitive paganism of force.

The German military caste has enthroned the same old paganism, but it has furnished it with the frankest creed it has ever confessed since the earliest naïve creeds of deeds began to "clothe their naked shame" with creeds of words. The national obsession of the Germans has betrayed itself at its ghastliest in the most fanatical surrender to this pagan creed that has been exhibited on a large scale since the most sanguinary period of Islam. Bernhardt and Treitschke have been merely the best advertised among the countless acolytes of this archaeological paganism in its German revival: "The State is power!" *Der Staat ist Macht!*

Now, as I have just pointed out, this creed of the resuscitated paganism to which the Germans have become unresisting perverts accurately indicates the character of a majority of the states that have actually occurred thus far in the moral evolution of society. As a mere matter of logic, however, the psychosis through which this generalization of fact has become domiciled in the minds of the Germans as the supreme imperative of their national religion

is a case of one of the most elementary fallacies. It is as though one should reason: *Man is an animal; therefore, the supreme privilege and duty of man is to imitate the beasts of prey.* Ever since Aristotle it has been a part of the world's common sense that the whole story about anything is told, not by its beginnings, but by its beginnings plus its completions.

Simple as is the logical refutation of the German creed of power, the ethical refutation is still more decisive. Both in its academic expositions and in its applications in the conduct of the German government toward other governments and peoples, the creed, "*The State is power,*" turns out to be insolent denial of every ancient or modern ethical or religious faith which has followed instinct or vision of the evolving sovereignty of the spirit. "*The State is power*" turns out to mean: If a weaker people possess anything that the rulers of a stronger people want, those rulers of the stronger people need only plead "military necessity," and no law of man or God may stay any hideous use of force which might enable the stronger to work their will. For three years the Germans have been proving their faith by works of ruthlessness more ferocious than the world has seen since the madness of the Inquisition.

Nevertheless, for the same time, some of the best men and women in America have done what they could to make a mistaken conception of righteousness embarrass the vindication of righteousness. They have talked of "compromise" or something equally inconceivable. Between morality and physical power there can be no more compromise than between assertion and denial of the multiplication table. One must rule. The other must submit.

Let me interject the explanation that by "morality" I do not mean my code of conduct, nor yours; not a set of rules which Americans or Englishmen might desire to impose upon other peoples. By "morality" I mean, now, simply that irreducible minimum for the security of which we must fight to a finish against the Germans, namely, *the principle that whenever their enterprises visibly affect the interests of other men or other nations, civilized men, whether individuals or groups, are bound to prefer legal and rational to violent means of promoting their interests.*

Our national folklore has joined the name of an American naval officer, whose loyalty was less dubious than his ethics, with the unfortunate attempt at a patriotic aphorism: "My Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she ever be right, but, right or wrong, my country!" In their zeal for a more defensible patriotism honest pacifists have gone to the other extreme with a doctrine which practically means: Our country can never be right if, in the name of all its moral and physical force, it halts another nation that is violently wrong with the ultimatum, "Thus far and no farther."

At this moment the German cause reduces to the desperation of those militarists to vindicate themselves who for years have advertised the shameless creed that morality has no rights against the power of the state. For no one knows precisely how many years the German government has been a conspiracy to disfranchise morality in the conduct of nation toward nation, and to establish the military power of Germany in its place. So soon as we Americans take in this ugly fact, those of us with the rudiments of a conscience must realize that, until the Germans repudiate this military caste and the creed it imposes, to be at peace with Germany would make our nation a moral monstrosity.

In practice, the German system works out in two aspects which to outward appearance are contradictory. Whether at bottom they are contradictory or complementary is a question too involved for profitable discussion here. Let us glance at each aspect in certain of its distinctive manifestations.

We may refer to these two obvious aspects of the German system as the *domestic* and the *foreign*, or the *national* and the *international*. Not only Americans, but Germans themselves, have been queered in their judgment of the German government by the fact that one and the same system presents appearances so contradictory that they cannot be reconciled. Both Germans and Americans have reasoned, in effect: "The domestic aspect of the German system reaches such benign results that the alleged badness of the German foreign policy cannot be real." It is one of the humors of our immature intellectuality that the most sophisticated of us still hunt for mental and moral consistency behind human actions!

For brevity let us call upon parable to picture the quality of the German domestic system.

My attention was first called to the town of Pullman by descriptions of it as a "model community." It was alleged that everything which intelligent benevolence could devise had been done to furnish the employees in the Pullman works with all the living conditions necessary for their comfort and happiness. Not long after, my lot was cast in such a way that only half an hour separated my home from Pullman. Very soon there were labor disturbances at Pullman, and, with others, I was called upon to investigate. I found that the descriptions which I had read of the physical equipment of the town had not been too highly colored. At the same time, I found the most discontented and bitter inhabitants that I had ever met. The burden of their complaints was not expressed in terms of wages, nor labor hours, nor any other physical standards of living. The worst-felt grievance seemed to be voiced in the assertion that they were treated like children, not like men and women. The most telltale bit of evidence that I discovered was the current sneer: "We are born in a Pullman house, cradled in a Pullman crib, fed from a Pullman store, taught in a Pullman school, confirmed in a Pullman church, exploited in a Pullman shop, and when we die we'll be buried in a Pullman grave and go to a Pullman hell."

It would be contrary to the evidence to doubt that, in motive, George M. Pullman was a conscientious philanthropist. His mistake was in principle that of all the genuinely benevolent despots. He confounded philanthropy with patronage. He had not found out that the best way for men to help men is not to do things for them, but to do things with them, and perhaps better still to remove removable hindrances to their doing things for themselves.

When I became a citizen of Waterville, in 1881, and wished to walk abroad of a night when the moon was not in session, I always carried a lantern. There was not a street light in town. Neither was there a street car, nor a water-main, nor a sewer. Not a lawnmower had ever been in commission. The yards looked like pastures that had strayed in from the farms. The two most sightly spots for the landscape gardener in the center of the town

were dumping places for débris. There was not a public school-house which any of the prosperous citizens would have consented to use as a stable, and a little later I built the second, possibly the third, house in the town that contained a bathroom.

As I have looked about in Waterville at intervals during the past forty-eight hours, it has seemed to me that some mightier Aladdin had meanwhile been conjuring. I can see room for improvement still. You cannot control the rain, for instance, but some day you will control the mud. And many other kinds of progress will doubtless mark the next thirty years. As it is, the contrast between Waterville as I first knew it and the Waterville of today is the outward sign of a generation's advance in civilization. And you have done it yourselves! It has not been handed down to you from above! You would not have taken it as a gift; you would even go back a generation and do it all over again, if the alternative were to accept it out of hand, even from the most masterful of the public-spirited men who have lived among you in the course of these years. Rather than be policed in every detail of life outside of your domicile, and in many details within it, by the most magnanimous human beings you have ever known, you would elect a return to primitive conditions, and to the adventure of working out that salvation of personality which can be achieved only in the exercise of responsible self-direction.

In miniature, the contrast between the town of Pullman and the town of Waterville reflects the difference between German and American civic conditions, with the single difference that the Germans are proud of their kind and despise ours, while we hold to our kind and abhor theirs.

Now, the case is by no means as one-sided as either people think. If the worthy way through life for a moral being were a greater Cook's personally conducted tour, our American method would be a hopeless competitor with the German. In sheer bodily comfort and security and in certain guaranties of spiritual liberty, regardless of possible not completely stifled scruples about abdication of one's selfhood, the average German during the past generation has undoubtedly got more for what he paid than the average American. But there's the rub! The unreckoned part of

the price which the Germans pay is their aborted personality. Von Buelow knew his Germans when he said, in his volume *Imperial Germany*, published not long before the war, that the Germans are not political beings, that they are incapable of parliamentary government. I began to find that out in my first contacts with Germans in 1879. As a deliberate experiment, I have many times, then and since, led conversations with casual acquaintances up to some political subject. Almost invariably, unless I happened to have met a member of the political class, although there had been no hesitation about expression of opinion upon all previous topics, the stereotyped answer would be: "O! That's a matter for the government!" We may not boast that the output of average individual American opinion upon political questions is impressive; but this is impressive, namely, the consciousness of every American that it is a part of his personality to exert his own unrestricted share in creating political standards and in shaping political policies.

As long as I live, I shall not cease to grieve that these two conceptions of what is best in civic life could not have worked side by side to their limit in peace. It may well be that there is more in each of these conceptions than those who can see good in only one of them are able to understand. It may be that civilization might have been served best in the long run if these two types of civic experiment could have developed in parallel columns, until the advantages and the disadvantages of each had demonstrated themselves to both.

However that may be, Americans have always reckoned liberty of political self-expression and self-realization among the choicest of human goods; while since 1848 the Germans have made no formidable demand for individual self-expression in politics. Nearly twenty-five years ago Pastor Frommel, who had been frozen out of his position as Court Preacher at Berlin because of his pernicious sympathy with the wage-earning classes, told me that, when he began to get into personal touch with factory operatives, he was astonished at the nature of their demands. He said that regularly, in reply to his question, "What do you want?" the answer, from men and women alike, would be, "We want recognition" (*Wir wünschen Anerkennung*). Which, being inter-

puted, meant that they wanted to be met by their employers on the level of human beings and to be accorded the rights of human beings in representing their own interests. Up to the present moment there has been in Germany neither an effective concerted movement to gain similar recognition in politics, nor evidence that there is enough latent demand for such recognition among the Germans to make such a movement respectable.

Worse than this, domineering militarism has kept civil life in Germany in a cowering menial attitude toward the army, and it has put official premiums upon an overbearing attitude of the army toward civilians.

One morning, ten or fifteen years ago, I happened to be in Potsdam when the order of the day included presentation of the colors to a regiment of new troops. The guard of honor was drawn up on one side of a square of which a church formed the second side, the spectators the third, while the fourth side was to be occupied by the approaching regiment. The Kaiser had returned that day from a vacation, and in the corner by the church he was chatting with members of his staff. I was near enough to see every detail in pantomime, without hearing a word. The Kaiser had said something flattering to a big handsome officer, who stood in his bravery of gala uniform and decorations preening himself after the Kaiser had passed on to the next in line. Just then a little girl of perhaps five or six years appeared through a narrow archway in the wall near the church. She looked searchingly in every direction, then stretched her hand above her head, and I saw that she had been sent to post a letter in a box behind the tall officer. It was too high. The little girl raised herself on tip-toes, but could not reach the opening. She turned and stood irresolute for a moment, her disappointed, bewildered look perfectly legible from my point of observation. Then she took notice of the big strong man, and her face lighted up with a glad smile at the instinctive feeling that he was the solution of her difficulty. She lifted the letter toward him. He took it mechanically, with one or two glances back and forth between it and her. His intellect was evidently less brilliant than his uniform. Presently the idea took shape in his brain that this slip of a girl had called on him for help.

With an arrogant toss of his head and a contemptuous snap of his wrist, he threw the letter to the ground.

Volumes might be written on German militarism without telling more about its essential spirit than this incident revealed. It was merely a mannerism, too matter-of-course to be questioned by Germans, of the same civilization in which public-school programs were suspended and pupils were coached to celebrate the murder of women and children on the *Lusitania*. I repeat that, whatever the other excellencies of the Germans, a national sentiment which tolerates an army with that spirit toward the people is demonstration of pitifully aborted personality.

But it is in the other aspect, in its attitude toward other nations, that the soulless paganism which the Germans have accepted from their militarists as the national religion most immediately appears. Again I forbear generalities and testify from my own experience.

In the summer of 1903 I was in Germany on business which gave me occasion to sample the opinions about our country of more different classes of Germans than I had ever interviewed before. The itinerary scheduled stops at Cologne, Lucerne, Vienna, Budapest, Munich, Dresden, Berlin, and thence an excursion into Russia. At each of these points, and in the intermediate travel, I had opportunities to talk with many men of prominence and with as many more whom I could classify merely as ordinary specimens of their various types. I soon became aware that, quite aside from the direct purpose of my trip, I was gathering from these sources a collection of significant and cumulative evidence. Over and over again Germans of different social positions, living in as many different parts of Germany and neighboring countries, volunteered the same opinion in almost the same words: "You Yankees are all right, but it is only a question of time when we Germans will have to fight you, not with trade regulations, but with cannon." And my question "Why?" invariably brought the stereotyped answer: "Because you are trying to get some of the world's foreign commerce."

Up to that time I had firmly believed in the pacific intentions of Germany. I had regarded the pan-German agitation as a joke. I had interpreted the familiar grandiose utterances of Kaiser, and

professor, and editor, and Reichstag orator as the harmless word-painting of an imaginative people who delight in setting national commonplaces in a heroic light. But these coincidences started my reflections in a new direction. It was incredible that so many men, of such different kinds, from such widely separated places, could have arrived independently at such an astonishing consensus. Such a state of mind must have been the result of some central influence or influences. A captain of infantry, whom I met in the home of a friend in Berlin, strengthened this inference when he gave me a book which contained the same sentiment in almost the same words, with the comment which afterward proved to carry accrued interest: "It is the most popular book of the year among German officers." Then I began to pick up other threads of association. I recalled a lecture which I had heard during my student days by Professor Gneist, of Berlin, who at the time was reputed to be the foremost continental expositor of the British constitution. The argument expanded these propositions: "The United States of America has no sovereign. Therefore it has no sovereignty. Therefore it is not in the proper sense of the term a state. Therefore it is not entitled to the full rights of a state among states." I had listened with amusement to the exposition and had scarcely thought of it meanwhile, because I had taken it as a choice specimen of academic pedantry, with no practical bearing. Presently I began to recall, however, that in my reading since my student days I had come across many German expressions of the same idea, with the implication that it was something to be taken for granted.

On my return to Chicago, I reported my experience in a newspaper interview, with the conclusion that we Americans would be living in a fool's paradise until we provided ourselves with a navy so strong that, even if the creed which I had heard should proselyte all Germany, it would be too unsafe to follow it into practice. For two or three weeks following publication of the interview, at a signal from Consul Wever, of Chicago—one of the most efficient promoters of German interests that has ever represented that country in the United States—the German-language press of America and not a few publications in English bristled with

abuse of the ignorant American tourist who had insulted Germany by drawing such an inference from such data.

Up to the present hour the Germans have pursued the same policy of denying the significance of any and every fact which tended to fix on them the stigma of militarism in general or responsibility for the present war in particular. No matter what German has indorsed the creed of force, or of terrorization as the technique of the creed, even the Kaiser, or the Crown Prince, or the chancellor, or authors with readers by the hundred thousands, the professional German apologists have always given the cue for a world-wide claque to shout the repudiation: "That particular utterance, or that particular man, cuts no figure in Germany."

We have always had a few men in American politics who waxed great in their own eyes by declamation of the manifest destiny of the United States to be "bounded on the north by the Aurora Borealis, on the south by the Southern Cross." Usually the saving sense of the people, ably aided and abetted by the obduracy of things, has rendered such politicians innocuous. But suppose the present Speaker of the House of Representatives had received the presidential nomination from the Baltimore convention of 1912, and suppose he had been elected. Very few Americans realize by what a narrow margin that calamity was averted. Suppose he had made good his maudlin threat of committing this country to the annexation of Canada. Suppose we had made it a test of loyalty to support his administration in waging a war for the conquest of the Dominion. Suppose we had persisted in accepting without question the administration's fiction—"The war was forced upon us!" Suppose we had refused to cast in our lot with any peace movement which might involve overthrow of the administration or of the party that had seduced the country into its immoral course. In that case our deeds would have spoken louder than our words. American character would consequently have to be known, not by what Americans had denied in terms, but by what we had actually done.

The outstanding fact, to which the Germans have been delivering themselves with accelerated motion till the incredible culmination of 1914, and since, is that all the Germans have adopted as their own the cause of those leaders who have advertised their trust in war as the foremost means of satisfying national ambitions.

I have said that all through the ages two contradictory conceptions of national life have urged for expression and mastery. We have been reviewing the form in which the one conception has taken its latest shape in German word and deed. Time remains for only the briefest allusion to the alternative tendency. A part of the next great constructive task of mankind is to give distinctness and reality to the opposite conception.

In spite of those ancient states to which history has given the name "republic," it is not certain that the antithesis of the present dominating German idea of the state ever began to be articulate in the voice of a great public until more confident than convincing expressions of it were heard in the American and the French revolutions. Today we are trying to symbolize the whole truth by the slogan: "Democracy against Autocracy!" While that watchword may be suggestive enough for rallying purposes, a nation which accepted that antithesis as either precise or exhaustive would soon resolve itself into a wholesale case of the blind leading the blind. We have the task of finding the crystal truth in contradiction of the turgid lie: "The State is power."

I venture the opinion that we shall never separate the truth from vitiating error until we have broken utterly with all our traditional doctrines of the state in terms of that plausible philosophical conception, "sovereignty." The real truth, and the whole truth, will be found only after we have taken our departure from the homely fact that a state is essentially like any other human group—a bridge club, a philharmonic society, a merchandizing firm, a banking corporation, a charity organization, a religious community, a counterfeiters' gang, an artists' guild—a *state is a company of persons behaving themselves in a certain way*. Whatever distance in comprehension or in character may separate a group which we call a state from each and every other type of human group, a state continues its identity with each and every other human group, at least in this: it is composed of human beings, with all the moral liabilities of human beings. By forming themselves into, or by finding themselves in, any sort of grouping whatsoever, human beings cannot release themselves from the universal obligation of human beings to respect the humanity of one another. They cannot exempt themselves from a jot or a tittle of

one of the laws of physical or mental or moral cause and effect, which are bound to assert themselves sooner or later as the inexorable conditions of the human lot.

The central, supreme, paramount issue of this war is whether civilization is to instal the principle of aggression as its highest law; whether for a defiant epoch morality is to be suspended; whether, during an era of the most cynical apostasy that the record of mankind will have registered, that nation is to be greatest which can mobilize the most terrific force and use it in the most savage way.

In his zeal to reassure the American people and to convince all other peoples that the United States does not want anybody's goods, or chattels, or lands, or anything that is our neighbors', President Wilson has made it possible for the stupid and the designing to assert that Americans are fighting for nothing.

On the contrary, those Americans who are morally awake are fighting for everything above the mercenary level that makes life worth the living. We are fighting for the decision that henceforth this world shall be a place in which physical power shall be, not the standard of right, but the servant of right. No other generation in history has had an equal opportunity to promote the moral achievements of mankind. The remaining catastrophe most to be feared is not that more thousands of lives may have to be offered upon the altar of this century's high decision. If coming generations could look down upon us, their anxiety would be, first and chiefest, lest we should stay our hands before we had secured the primacy of morals in the affairs of nations.

No state since the days of the Decalogue has committed itself to a loftier political ideal than that which our country professes. Citizenship of the United States involves loyalty or treason to that ideal. Coined into terms of today, that ideal requires that progressive sense of justice shall enact the laws; and that law shall control force, not force the law, both in domestic and in foreign relations. No other people ever received so rich an endowment of physical resources as we have inherited. Are we to squander that endowment upon our physical and moral softnesses, or shall we use it to support the prodigious moral experiment to which we are committed? The world being what it is, Americans of this gener-

ation can neither improve nor retain their birthright unless they are resolved to continue instalment payments of the same price of suffering with which our fathers bought our birthright.

Few native Americans have more or weightier reasons for gratitude to Germany than I have been accumulating for nearly forty years. None can be more willing in every possible way to acknowledge the debt which can never be discharged. And yet! And yet! This will be an intolerable world until the Germans have once and forever recanted, with all it involves, that most hellish heresy that has ever menaced civilization: **THERE IS NO GOD BUT POWER, AND PRUSSIA IS ITS PROPHET!**

The Germans are still so unsuspecting of their rulers that they do not want to be disillusioned. President Wilson never uttered more literal truth than when he told us that in fighting with the Germans we shall prove in the end to have been fighting for the Germans as well as for ourselves, just as our fight with the English in '76 proved to be a fight, not for our own liberty alone, but for the enfranchisement of every subject of the British crown.

With the most cordial hopes that in the days to come the Germans may enjoy all the prosperity of every sort which they can win on their merits, without violating the equal rights of any other people, we should be numbered among the betrayers of mankind if we did not now exert our utmost physical and spiritual strength to convince the Germans that their Baal is asleep, never more to wake, or on a journey, never again to return.

Now is our nation's Gethsemane. In the beginnings of our agony and bloody sweat we are still praying, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" God grant that the generations to come may forever cherish the memory of the cross which we shall bear, as the symbol of their redemption unto spiritualized political life!